Research on: I AM THAT I AM

Ex. 3:1, 7, 10-12, 13-15

“To Moses was given a fuller revelation of the nature of God

than had heretofore been known. God had declared Himself to Abraham

as “the Almighty,” but to Moses he declared Himself as Jehovah, as the

“I AM THAT I AM,” the Self-Existent One—“The living God.” To

strengthen Moses’ confidence and to provide Israel with convincing

testimony of Moses’ commission, he was given two visible signs of divine

power—the turning of his rod into a serpent and the healing of the leprous hand” (Shotwell, 107).

“The years of Moses’s life are remarkably divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh’s court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun. He had now finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes it is long before God calls his servants out to that work which of old he designed them for. Moses was born to be Israel’s deliverer, and yet not a word is said of him till he is eighty years of age” (Benson Commentary, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/3-1.htm)>.

1Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.

“The names Horeb and Sinai seem to be synonymous, though it has been suggested that Horeb is the name given to the entire mountain range, while Sinai denotes the particular mountain where the Law was given” (Dummelow 51).

“One day Moses drives the flock ‘beyond’ (some try to translate it, ‘to the west of’; others, ‘far side of’) his usual grazing area in order to seek pasture for them” (*EBC* 1.363).

2And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

“That’s a very important intersection for mankind because between Genesis and Exodus, there may be maybe nearly 400 hears of silence between Joseph and Moses.

What caused the silence? Wasn’t God revealing? Wasn’t God communicating? Well, where did the fault lie? Since communication has that prefix **co**, the fault lies either with the source or the receiver. And we almost find an abrupt change as Moses becomes a receiver. And it took him some while before he became a receiver.

And there he was in the mostly unlikely place in the middle of Sinai, and here is a bush burning. But somehow it wasn’t consumed. If that were happening in the middle of Times Square the local commuters and pedestrians would merely rustle their “Wall Street Journals” and walk on by,

But Moses stops to find out why. That makes him an inquirer and immediately casts him as an important scientific observer in the history of humanity. That’s scientific inquiry, isn’t it? He wants to know **why** that the bush hasn’t burned.

And, at that moment, he receives communication. And he receives one of the greatest breakthroughs about God, one that every one of us must have today before we can progress in any comprehension of the Godhead, I AM.

Why is that such a breakthrough? Because here those children of Israel for nearly 400 years in bondage had been worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived hundreds of years before. After many centuries of long, tired prayers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and nothing happening currently, what happens to any concept of God as I AM? It really becomes you’re worshipping not an I AM God, but what? an I WAS God.

And that’s a God who is dead. And not too long ago, “Time” magazine, on their cover, brought that back again. That’s a I WAS God. Here the tremendous pushing aside, waiting for the receiver, Moses, to get that point: “I AM, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and I AM has sent me unto you.”

I’m still I AM. I’m not a God of the past.

Ex 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Cobbey Crisler).

“Fire is a frequent emblem of God in the Scriptures on account of its illuminating, purifying, and destructive properties, and appears as the accompaniment and indication of His presence . . . A sacred fire had sealed the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15:1), marked the presence of God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2-4) guided and protected the Israelites by a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21; 14:19,20), been manifest on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19:18), accompanied the translation of Elijah (II Ki. 2:11), and was the sign to Elisha of preservation from the Syrian army (II Ki. 6:17). . . At Mount Horeb an angel appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a burning bush; and though the bush burned it was not consumed. By this sign Jehovah made known His presence and power to Moses (Ex. 3:1-6)” (Shotwell, 168).

“Moses’ experience t the Burning Bush (Ex. 4) opened his eyes to the great truth that God is the I AM THAT I AM: the only Soul, or Ego; the one Cause, Creator or Principle. . . It is interesting to note that the hotheaded, impulsive prince had become a humble, patient shepherd, wise enough now to lead his people out of bondage Neither he nor they had been ready before” Tathum, 104).

**The major point here is that the bush is burning, but is not consumed.**

4 And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

“**See** is *ra’ah* in Hebrew which means “to perceive, consider, have vision, behold, discern, distinguish, look intently” (Strong’s 2095).

“He doubles the name, partly to show kindness and familiarity, and principally to make Moses more attentive to the business before him.” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

“God called unto him out of the midst of the bush; with an articulate voice, being the eternal Word:

“and said, Moses, Moses; for the Lord knows his people distinctly, and can call them by name; and the repetition of his name not only shows familiarity and a strong vehement affection for him, but haste to stop him, that he might proceed no further; and this was done in order to stir him up to hearken to what would be said to him:

“and he said, here am I; ready to hear what shall be said, and to obey whatever is commanded.” (Gill’s Exposition).

7¶ And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters;

“Israel is no longer a family, but a people and a nation – one so internally linked to Yahweh that he calls them ‘ammi, “my people” (*EBC* 1.366).

10Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

“The call of Moses comes to a double conclusion with the phrase, ‘And/so now’. Verse 10 is the bottom line to the whole incident of the burning bush; it is the formal commissioning of Moses as God’s emissary to lead Israel out of Egypt” (*EBC* 1.365).

13And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

“The name of God is His revealed character. . . The word Jehovah is the result of a combination of the consonants of the original name (the consonants alone are written in ancient Hebrew). The name denotes the **absolute self-existence of God**. He alone truly exists” (Dummelow 51).

“Moses must know the name of the one who authorizes such a dangerous mission. The mission is dangerous not only for Moses, but also for the Israelites, who are asked to engage in massive civil disobedience against Pharaoh. Such a risk will require unambiguous warrant” (*NIBC* 1.714).

14And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

“Now, what’s so beautiful about that is that Jesus took the statement a little further later in the gospels. He said that that’s the proof that there’s a resurrection, that man is eternal. You remember that in his argument with the Sadducees? He made the point that since God said, “I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” what did that do for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?”

If “I **AM** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac…” where are Isaac and Jacob? (See below, Partial)

Ex 1:6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

They are still living. So, you see, Jesus elevated manhood to eternality just as Moses saw, in the revelation from God, that God was eternal and always I AM.

Jesus added that God was now revealing that makes man eternal. Now, what does that do to church and the concept of man working together cooperatively? An immense breakthrough!” (Cobbey Crisler).

“The story tells us that Moses’ sight was not dim. Like the burning bush, which illustrates the operable, ever presence, eternal, indestructible nature of true substance. He demonstrated that substance in various ways during the trek over Sinai. Their shoes and clothes didn’t wax old. Moses’ eyes were clear, undiminished. He caught that vision that the substance of all things is spiritual and indestructible and permanent. That law of God is the law of harmony and continuity of good for every spiritual idea.

Deut. 8:4

4Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

The bush was not consumed. Even though fire should have destroyed it, it couldn’t touch it really. God is not a god of the dead, but of the living. Jesus says Moses showed us this at the bush:

Luke 20:37, 38

37Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Not an I WAS God but an I AM God.

Jesus is proving that there is a resurrection to the Sadducees. If I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where are Isaac and Jacob and Abraham? They are still living. Jesus reveals that because God is eternal, then man is eternal.

“Gradually their God became the I AM THAT I AM, the Self-created, always existing

Being. And finally, as revealed to and by the great Literary Prophets,

He became the One and Only God of the whole universe. The author of Genesis One was obviously aware of this great truth: the ALL-power must be the Only Power” (Tathem 8, Old Testament Made Easy).

“The significance of the fact that the appellation "I AM"

belongs to God and not to man is worthy of careful consideration.

We are led by both reason and revelation to see that

since there is but one God there can be but one "I AM," and

that one not mortal but immortal, not imperfect but perfect,

not human but divine. The truth then is the truth now.

Man as the reflection of God cannot, therefore, think or

correctly speak of himself as having existence independent

of God, but rather as the expressed image and likeness of “I Am.”

“Because "I AM" is Spirit, God, the being

which is "holiness, harmony, immortality" man is

clearly seen to be its individual likeness in multitudinous

forms. There are then in reality no common men, no illiterates,

no degraded ones, no sick, no sinners, no dead; but all

true individualities are the perfect expressions of the one

ever perfect "I AM."

(“I Am” Julia Warner Michael, CSS, May 22, 1915)

*“He that*IS*, and*WAS, *and*IS TO COME. It explains his name Jehovah, and signifies, 1st, That he is *self- existent:*he has his being of himself, and has no dependence on any other. And being *self-existent,*he cannot but be *self-sufficient,*and therefore *all-sufficient,*and the inexhaustible fountain of being and blessedness. That he is *eternal*and *unchangeable:*the *same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”*

*(Benson Commentary, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/3-14.htm).*

“When used of God, ‘name’ in the OT has a revelatory content. The name of God means primarily his revealed nature and character. . . As expressing essential nature, it implies the most complete divine self-disclosure, while the identification of name and person safeguards the unity of God.. .To know the name of God is to know God himself as he is revealed” (*IDB* 3.502).

15And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

“In the formulation of v. 15, the name *Yahweh* is uttered as a summary of the longer ancestral formulation. The name *Yahweh* ostensibly derives from some form of the verb *to be* (*haya*) so that God is the power for life, the power of being, the power of newness” (*NIBC* 1.714).

Sue Harper Mims, in an article from the *Christian Science Sentinel*, October 7, 1905, writes:

“Recognition of the voice of Truth, and obedience to it, open the door to spiritual illumination, hence there was poured into Moses’ receptive consciousness the glorious revelation of God as the ‘I am that I am,’ – the one individual supreme Mind, or infinite Being, the one intelligence that guided Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the ‘strong Deliverer’ from the bondage of Egypt.”

God as I AM must have relevance to the Hebrew’s trek from bondage. One cannot strike a match to the term I AM and reduce it to ashes. It is one of the most important concepts in the Scriptures.